

Decision Memo
Causey Reservoir Improvements
Ogden Ranger District, Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest
Weber County, Utah
July 2019

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document details my decision regarding a proposal for improvements around Causey Reservoir (i.e., boat ramp, additional parking, and changes to the overlook). The proposed action occurs on National Forest System land administered by the Ogden Ranger District of the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest (“Forest Service”).

Project number in the Planning, Appeals, and Litigation System database: 56363

General Location: The project is located approximately 10 miles east of Huntsville, Utah.

2.0 PROPOSED ACTION

Causey Reservoir is a popular location for fishing, swimming, hiking, and other activities. The number of visitors accessing the reservoir has increased dramatically over the last several years causing conflicts and resource concerns. The Weber County Sheriff’s department responds to several search and rescue calls each summer. Parking is limited at the reservoir and visitors have been parking on the dam and in any location available. The existing parking is overwhelmed, and resource damage is occurring from visitors parking outside designated locations. Visitors are also parking along the road and blocking access for residents of Causey Estates and emergency vehicles. If changes are not made we will continue to have resource damage and blocked access.

In 2017 a working group was created with the Weber County Sheriff’s office, Weber County, Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest, Bureau of Reclamation, and the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. The group came up with recommendations on how to improve safety and reduce recreation impacts at Causey Reservoir. The actions being proposed include: (1) installing “No Parking” signs (e.g., on the dam itself, along the road, and gate to Causey Estates); (2) constructing a new overflow parking lot south of the dam; (3) constructing a concrete boat ramp along the southwest shore of the south arm to provide emergency access to the reservoir for Weber County Sheriff office; and, (4) expanding parking at the Skull Crack Trailhead parking area (Figure 1). Upon project completion parking will only be allowed in designated parking areas. Public access to the boat ramp will be limited to walk-in only.

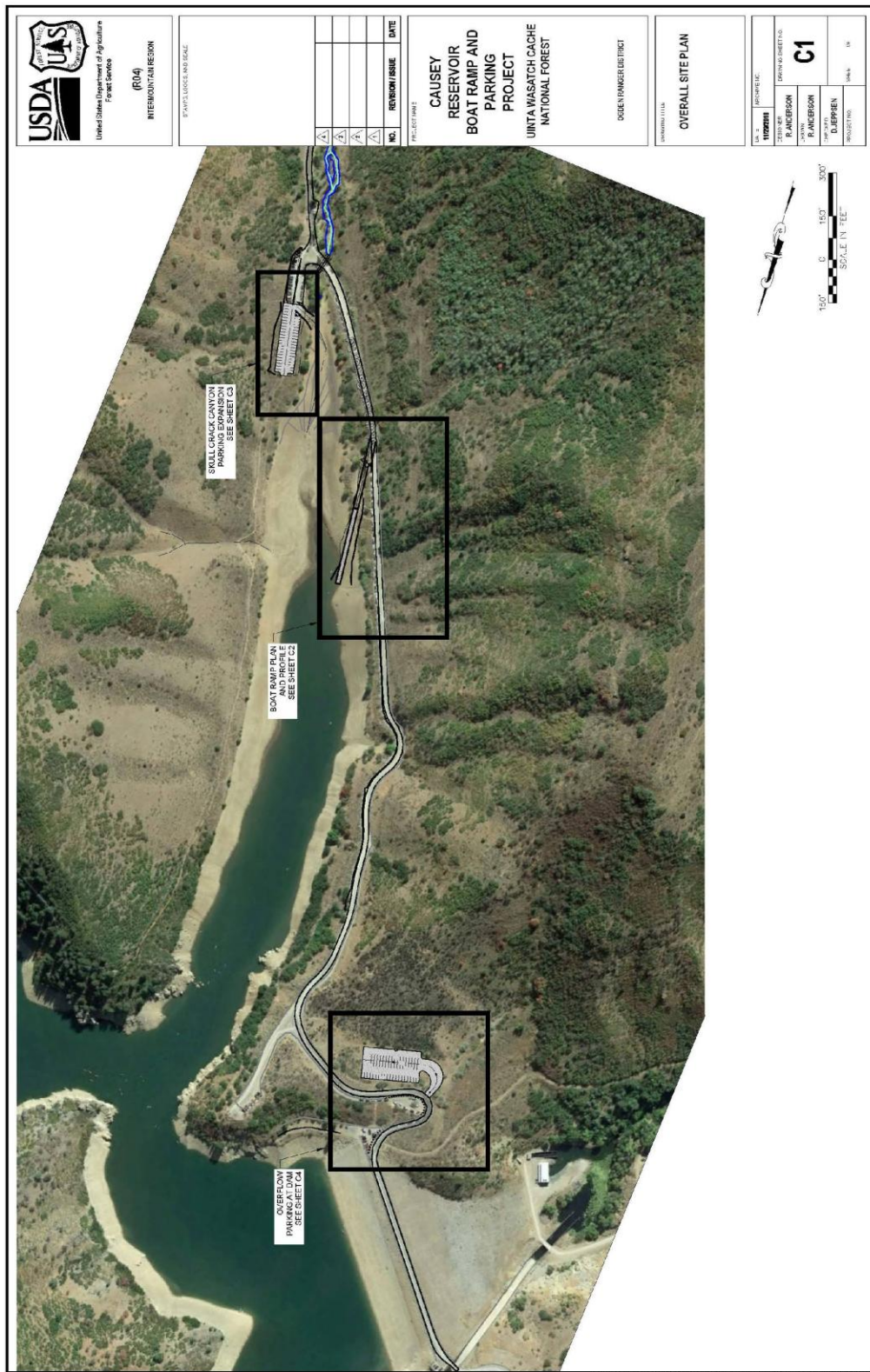


Figure 1. Proposed action for the Causey Reservoir Improvements project.

2.1 Design Criteria

1. Fisheries: Boat ramp construction will occur during time frames when the reservoir is at low pool which should avoid cutthroat spawning. While pouring concrete ensure no wet concrete enters the waterbody.

2. Hydrology: Permittee will need to provide the USACE District Engineer a Pre-Construction Notification for boat ramp construction and permit requirements under Clean Water Act Section 404. Project may or may not be covered under Nation Wide Permit 36 depending on total fill amounts to be placed in the Waters of the US and District Engineer's waiver of established volume and width limits (currently limited to 50CY of fill, 20' wide ramp).

Expansion of Skull Crack parking area will occur within RHCA for Causey Reservoir. Areas to be developed for this parking lot are dry, upland areas. During construction, storm water erosion control BMPs should be utilized to prevent project generated sediment from entering waterbody during runoff producing precipitation.

3. Botany:

The following measures will be implemented to reduce the risk of invasive plant establishment and spread associated with proposed activities:

- Do not stage equipment, materials, or crews in invasive plant infested areas.

- Equipment should be cleaned and free of vegetation, soil and debris prior to beginning work on FS land. If equipment leaves project area it should be cleaned and inspected prior to reentry on to forest. If the equipment has to work or pass through known infestation areas, the equipment should be cleaned prior to moving into known "infestation free" areas of the project area.

- Reestablish vegetation on disturbed bare ground using source appropriate seed from native species.

FS botanist will approve all seed mixes.

- Any additional infestation discovered prior to or during project implementation should be reported to the botanist for prioritization and assessment for treatment.

- After the project is completed the botanist should be notified so that (as funding allows) the project area can be monitored for invasive plants subsequent to project implementation.

3.0 DECISION AND RATIONALE

My decision is to authorize the proposed action along with the required design criteria as described in section 2, above.

Based on environmental analysis and input from an interdisciplinary team of Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest resource specialists, I have determined that this action may be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement. In particular, this action falls under 36 CFR 220.6(e)(3) *Approval, modification, or continuation of minor special uses of NFS lands that require less than five contiguous acres of land.*

The seven resource conditions that are considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action warrant further analysis and documentation in an environmental assessment

or an environmental impact statement are discussed below. As per Chapter 30, Section 31.2 of Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, the mere presences of one or more of these resource conditions does not preclude use of a categorical exclusion.

I have concluded that there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the decision that may result in a significant individual or cumulative environmental effect.

4.0 SCOPING

This project was reviewed by the interdisciplinary team of resource specialists. Members of the interdisciplinary team visited the project site and surveyed the proposed project area. Representatives from the Forest Service discussed this project Weber County Sheriff's office, Weber County, Bureau of Reclamation, and the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. This project was available for public review in the Schedule of Proposed Actions beginning on June 26, 2019; no public comments were received in response to this notification.

5.0 FOREST PLAN AND LEGAL CONSISTENCY

The project area is located within and is consistent with the desired future conditions for the North Wasatch Ogden Valley Management Area as described in the 2003 Revised Land and Resource Management Plan [for the] Wasatch Cache National Forest, as amended ("Forest Plan", pp. 140-151). Specifically, "Causey Reservoir will be managed for non-motorized opportunities with primary emphasis on day use" (Forest Plan, p. 4-148). The proposed action is within Management Prescription 4.4, which emphasizes recreation motorized settings by providing recreation opportunities within a range of semi-primitive to rural settings. . . Access to and within these areas is primarily through the use of motorized trails and roads" (Forest Plan, p. 4-73) and is consistent with the prescription guidelines, in particular, G4.4-3 which allows new recreation development and new trail construction (Forest Plan, p. 4-73)

I find that the proposed action is fully consistent with the Forest Plan as well as in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and policies. Specifically; the National Forest Management Act, National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended; Clean Water Act; Congressional designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or National Recreation Areas; Inventoried Roadless Areas; Research Natural Areas; Native American religious or cultural sites, archaeological sites, or historical properties or areas; Migratory Bird Treaty Act; Environmental Justice (Executive Order 12898).

6.0 OBJECTION OPPORTUNITIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

My decision is not subject to administrative appeal or objection, as outlined in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 and the Agricultural Act of 2014. This decision may be implemented immediately.

7.0 CONTACT PERSON

For additional information about the project, contact David Ashby at david.ashby@usda.gov or call 435-755-3628.

/s/Sean D. Harwood

Sean Harwood
District Ranger
Ogden

July 29th, 2019

Date

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